

NEW SHOREHAM SEWER AND WATER COMMISSION
JOINT MONTHLY MEETING
Monday • May 18, 2015 • 3 p.m.
Town Hall, Old Town Road, Block Island

PRESENT were SEWER Commission members: P. McNerney (Chair), Wayne Battey (Vice Chair), Brad Marthens, Martha Ball, Tom Doyle, Steve Draper (Alternate), Terri Chmiel (Alternate)

PRESENT were WATER Commission members: Brad Marthens (Chair), Tom Doyle (Vice Chair), P. McNerney, Wayne Battey, Martha Ball, Steve Draper (Alternate), Terri Chmiel (Alternate)

ALSO PRESENT were: Sewer Superintendent Chris Blane, Water Superintendent John Breunig, Town Manager Nancy Dodge (3:07), Finance Director Amy Land, Engineer Jim Geremia, Legal Counsel David Petrarca, Administrative Assistant Mona Helterline, BI Times Reporter

With a quorum present the meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m. by P. McNerney.

SEWER DISTRICT

1. Engineer's Report

- **FY 2014 Sewer Grant Project Summary.**

Engineer Jim Geremia reviewed the 2014 Sewer Grant projects which were divided into two categories: Collection System Improvements and Upgrades to the Wastewater Treatment Facility.

- **FY 2015 Proposed USDA Sewer Grant Application.**

Geremia explained that over the years the grant portion of USDA grant/loans had been dwindling. The proposed 2015 grant application for \$2M of projects would be approximately 20% grant (or \$400,000) which would then require the Commission to fund the remaining 80% loan (\$1.6 million) though rate increases.

2. Discussion and Potential Action regarding proposed FY 2015 Sewer Grant Application.

The Commission discussed the pros/cons of moving forward with the 2015 USDA Grant cycle. The proposed project list was reviewed as well as Geremia's suggested priorities. Since the grant amount was so low, other methods for completing some of the projects were discussed. It was unclear exactly when the Commission needed to make their final decision to move forward with the grant, but the decision would need to be made soon. Discussion continued regarding the need for a vote. A. Land would be looking into other ways of financing some of these projects.

JOINT SEWER AND WATER DISTRICT

3. Discussion and Potential Action regarding Manhole Covers, and Water Shut-offs (if any) on Ocean Ave.

A letter to RI Department of Transportation from Jim Geremia dated May 15, 2015 was presented. The Commission was unsatisfied with the work recently done by Cardi Corp to replace manhole covers and frames along Ocean Ave. They felt this work was poorly done and would result in material breaking away and entering the sewer system which could potentially lead to an overflow of sewage into Harbor Pond. The letter requested that Cardi Corp take immediate action to rectify this condition. While all 13 manholes needed corrective action, there were three manholes in particular that needed immediate attention regardless of how this got done. Discussion continued as to the process of repair and the proper way to move forward. P. McNerney suggested that the Commission should have an answer to this letter by Wednesday of next week.

4. Discussion and Potential Action regarding Annual Adoption of Reserve Policy

The Reserve Policy "Appropriate Levels of Working Capital, Cash Reserves and Capital Replacement Reserves" is adopted every year.

MOTION by P. McNerney to adopt the Annual Reserve Policy with no changes. Seconded by B. Marthens.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

5. PUBLIC HEARING:

- **Discussion and Potential Action regarding the Adoption of the FY 2016 Sewer District Budget, including any revisions, to be put before the electors of the Annual Financial Meeting on June 15, 2015.**

A. Land pointed out that the Capital Equipment line was increased from \$40,000 to \$77,586. At the direction of the Commission at the last meeting (May 12), the excess budgeted revenue over budgeted expense was to be allocated to the Capital Equipment line.

P. McNerney opened up the floor to Public Comment, which there was none.

M. Ball reviewed the requested salary detail of each employee.

MOTION by P. McNerney to adopt the FY 2016 Sewer District Budget as presented. Seconded by B. Marthens.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

- **Discussion and Potential Action regarding the Adoption of the FY 2016 Water District Budget, including any revisions, to be put before the electors of the Annual Financial Meeting on June 15, 2015.**

MOTION by B. Marthens to adopt the FY 2016 Water District Budget as presented. Seconded by W. Battey.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

6. Discussion and Potential Action regarding Annual Election of Officers.

B. Marthens nominated P. McNerney as Chair of the New Shoreham Sewer Commission and W. Battey as Vice Chair of the New Shoreham Sewer Commission, there were no further nominations for these positions.

P. McNerney nominated B. Marthens as Chair of the New Shoreham Water Commission and T. Doyle as Vice-Chair of the New Shoreham Water Commission. There were no further nominations for these positions.

MOTION by B. Marthens to elect the following nominations:

P. McNerney as Chair of the New Shoreham Sewer Commission

W. Battey as Vice-Chair of the New Shoreham Sewer Commission

B. Marthens as Chair of the New Shoreham Water Commission

T. Doyle as Vice-Chair of the New Shoreham Water Commission

Seconded by P. McNerney.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

7. Discussion and Potential Action regarding Award of Services:

- **Sludge Container (Sewer Commission Contract)**

There were two bids submitted for the Sludge Container Service Contract. One from MTG Disposal for \$1589.14 per trip, the other from BI Recycling Mgt. for \$1800.00 per trip.

Superintendent C. Blane stated that he was very happy with the service that MTG Disposal had been providing.

MOTION by P. McNerney to accept MTG Disposal's bid for Sludge Container Service. Seconded by B. Marthens.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

- **Emergency Septage Pumping and Hauling (Sewer Commission Contract)**

There was one bid submitted for Emergency Septage Pumping and Hauling by Robert Brown Septic with the following rates:

A. During the Hours of 7 AM-11PM

\$550 per hour

\$1500 per half day

\$3000 per day

B. During the Hours of 11PM-7AM

\$675 per hour

\$1700 per half day

\$4000 per day

The Commission discussed the fact that rates had increased significantly compared to the last contract (2013-2015). There was also discussion regarding ambiguity of the rate structure and the bid form. After reviewing actual usage and associated costs in past years, the Commission agreed that Robert Brown Septic had provided a reliable service and should be awarded the bid for Emergency Septage and Hauling.

MOTION by P. McNerney to accept Robert Brown Septic's bid for Emergency Septage Pumping and Hauling. Seconded by M. Ball.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

Jim Geremia left at 4:00 pm.

- **Oil Burner/Water Heater Service (Sewer and Water Commission Contract)**

There was one bid submitted for Oil Burner/Water Heater Service by New Shoreham Heating. The following rates were proposed:

Cost per facility per annual cleaning:

- Block Island Water Company: \$450
- Wastewater Treatment Plant: \$1250

Total cost for annual cleaning service contract for both facilities: \$1700 per year.

Cost per hour for additional service: \$100.

Cost had increased from the last contract period. P. McNerney explained that a special license was required to service the boiler at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, and because of that a subcontractor was required, which explained the difference between the two plants proposed costs.

MOTION by P. McNerney to accept New Shoreham Heating's bid for Oil Burner/Water Heater Service. Seconded by W. Battey.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

B. Marthens requested that for the next contract period (2017-2019), the bid specs be reviewed and revised.

P. McNerney asked the clerk about the Roadwork Contract, M. Helterline explained that it was still under revision and would go out to bid soon after approval from the lawyer.

8. Discussion and Potential action regarding Staff Policy: Operator Compensation.

The following points were made by the Commission:

- The Employee Handbook (agenda item #9) and Staff Policy: Operator Compensation should be reviewed for revisions in a work session. Opinion varied regarding if the work sessions should be combined or separate. Was the Staff Policy-Operator Compensation a separate topic than the Employee Handbook? Which should be addressed first?
- Current compensation policy had not changed since 2007.
- FY 2016 Proposed Budget was based on this compensation policy, so any changes would not be effective until FY 2017.

- T. Chmiel asked about the Superintendent Evaluations and when they would take place. It was pointed out that this topic was not on the agenda.
- McNerney requested this work session take place before June 2, 2015 and that both topics (Employee Handbook and Operator Compensation) be combined into one work session. Discussion regarding the feasibility of this continued.
- Marthens suggested tabling # 8 until #9 is completed, seconded by W. Battey. However, then discussion continued after that regarding why the compensation policy should be addressed first or along with the Employee Handbook.
- A work session among the Commission was scheduled for the employee handbook Wednesday, May 27 at 2pm. A time limit of 2 hours was set for this work session.

MOTION by P. McNerney to have an Employee Handbook work session on May 27, 2015 at 2pm, lasting no longer than 2 hours. Seconded by W. Battey.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

9. Discussion and Potential Action regarding Employee Handbook work session.

Discussed with #9.

10. Discussion and Potential Action regarding Proposed Letter to Town Council regarding Town Councilor presence and conduct at meetings of the Commissions.

P. McNerney requested the Commission's support in writing a letter to the Town Council in response to C. Warfel's letter dated March 20, 2015 and incorporated into the minutes of April 13, 2015. Discussion took place regarding the purpose of this proposed letter and the desired outcome. The Commission agreed that a draft must first be presented before they can endorse it.

MOTION by T. Doyle that P. McNerney draft a letter to be approved by the Commission and then be approved by Attorney and sent to Council. Seconded by W. Battey.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

11. Discussion and Potential Action regarding Legal Counsel purchasing High Speed Ferry Tickets.

D. Petrarca explained that the ability to use High Speed Ferry Tickets allowed him greater flexibility to attend meetings.

MOTION by P. McNerney to allow Legal Counsel David Petrarca to purchase a book of high speed ferry tickets. Seconded by T. Doyle.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

12. Discussion and Potential Action regarding Approval of April 13, April 28, May 12, 2015 minutes.

MOTION by P. McNerney to approve minutes of May 12, 2015 meeting. Seconded by B. Marthens.

Aye: 4 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 1.

MOTION by P. McNerney to approve minutes of April 13, 2015 meeting. Seconded by B. Marthens.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0

MOTION by P. McNerney to approve minutes of April 28, 2015 meeting. Seconded by B. Marthens.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0

SEWER DISTRICT (Continued)

13. Discussion and Potential Action regarding Mike and Gail Dugan's request for sewer abatement.

Dugan/Summer Hill (Cust #239) requested sewer abatement for the months of March and April. An open valve was emptying water into the root cellar which did not go into sewer system. A letter from the plumber was presented, confirming that the issue had been fixed.

MOTION by P. McNerney to abate 1,000 gallons of sewer usage in the month of March to Mike and Gail Dugan (Summer Hill, 511 Connecticut Ave). Seconded by T. Doyle.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

MOTION by P. McNerney to abate 19,000 gallons of sewer usage in the month of April to Mike and Gail Dugan (Summer Hill, 511 Connecticut Ave). Seconded by T. Doyle.

Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball) Nay: 0. Abstain: 0.

14. Discussion and Potential Action regarding method of educating the public about the dangers of flushing wipes.

Wipes had been a topic of conversation at several different meetings. The items that were being flushed down the toilet were causing major problems, binding up the pumps. Discussion was had regarding the best way to educate the public. A sampling of brochures and signs used by other towns were presented to the Commission. Discussion continued as to where and how these brochures should be distributed, summarized as follows:

- In July and August Bills
- Delivered to Housing Complexes such as E. Searles Ball Housing and Samuel Peckham's for dispersal to each residence.
- Real Estate Companies, to go into rental home books.
- BI Times on a regular basis.

Commission directed the Clerk to ask BI Times to design a full page flyer using as examples the "Wipes Clog Pipes" flyer and the front of the "Disposable Does Not Mean Flushable" brochure.

15. Discussion and Potential Action regarding Sewer Financials and Aging.

There were no comments for the Finance Director regarding Sewer Financials and Aging.

- **Tax Sale update**

There were three remaining customers on the tax sale list. D. Petrarca explained that the next step involved a Title exam, and any property still on the Tax Sale list as of June 1st would be subject to the associated title exam fees.

16. Sewer Operations report.

C. Blane verbally presented the April Operations and Maintenance Report. Highlighted as follows:

- 33% less effluent treated than April of 2014
- April 8, received notice that 1st Qtr. Bioassay test failed, no cause is pinpointed, but waterfowl are suspect. 2nd Qtr Bioassay will be monitored.
- A few interviews have taken place for Wastewater Operator 1 position.

WATER DISTRICT

17. Discussion and Potential Action regarding Water Financials and Aging.

There were no comments for the Finance Director regarding Water Financials and Aging.

- **Tax Sale update**

There was only one customer remaining on the tax sale list.

18. Water Operations report.

Superintendent summarized the April Maintenance and Operations Report:

- Major spring projects had been completed; this included jetting, flushing, meter turn-ons, etc.

- Cross Connection Control Backflow Device Testing went very smooth, had about a 20% failure rate, fails being addressed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPEN FORUM.

19. Commissioners' Announcements.

None

20. Public Comment for items not on the agenda.

21. Adjournment.

MOTION to adjourn at 5:27 p.m. by P. McNerney. Seconded by B. Marthens.
Aye: 5 (McNerney, Marthens, Battey, Doyle, Ball)

Respectfully Submitted,

Mona Helterline

ACCEPTED: 6/15/15

The New Shoreham Sewer and Water Districts are an equal opportunity provider and employer

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.